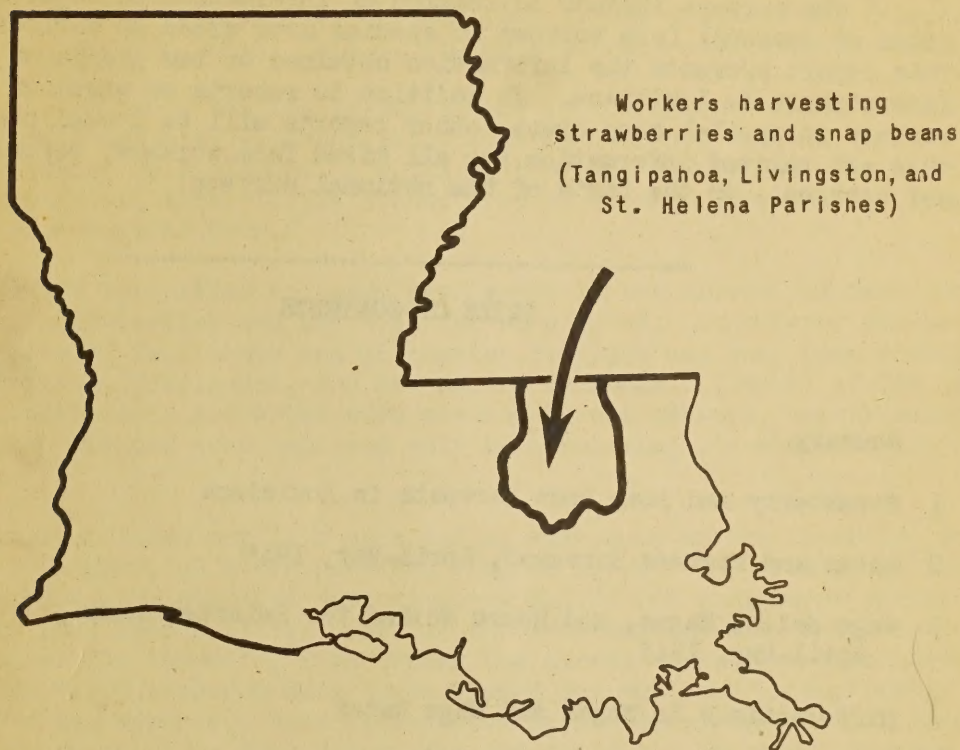


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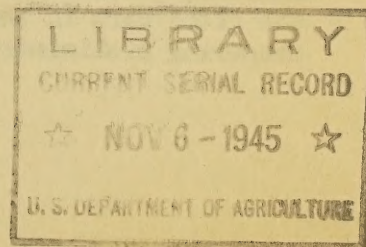
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Bureau of Agricultural Economics

WAGES AND WAGE RATES OF SEASONAL FARM WORKERS IN SPECIAL
CROP AREAS OF LOUISIANA, APRIL-MAY, 1945



Surveys of Wages and Wage Rates in Agriculture, Report Number 3

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PREFATORY NOTE

This is the third of a series of reports to be issued by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics presenting results secured from new enumerative sample surveys of farm wages and farm wage rates. The surveys were planned under the general direction of Conrad Taeuber, Office of the Chief, by a Bureau-wide Committee with Louis J. Ducoff as chairman. Members of the Wage Project Committee are as follows: Glen T. Barton, Emerson M. Brooks, Charles F. Cannell, Charles A. Gibbons, Margaret Jarman Hagood, Roger F. Hale, Earl E. Houseman, Barbara B. Reagan. The State Agricultural Statisticians cooperated in conducting the field operations of the survey.

The surveys include collection of information on wages and wage rates of seasonal farm workers in special crop areas of various States. This report presents the information obtained on two groups of seasonal farm workers in Louisiana. In addition to reports on wages of harvest workers in special crop areas, other reports will be issued presenting wage and related information for all hired farm workers, both regular and seasonal, on the basis of the national surveys.

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Prepared by Louis J. Ducoff and Gladys K. Bowles. Special acknowledgement is made to Miles McPeck and his staff for directing the field work in the special surveys covered in this report and for preparing preliminary summarizations of the data.

WAGES AND WAGE RATES OF SEASONAL FARM WORKERS
IN SPECIAL CROP AREAS OF LOUISIANA, APRIL-
MAY, 1945

SUMMARY

During selected weeks of April and May 1945, special surveys were made by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics to obtain information on wages and wage rates for workers harvesting strawberries and snap beans in the major producing areas of Louisiana. All of these workers — pickers and packers of strawberries and pickers of snap beans — were paid at piece rates which yielded average hourly earnings of approximately 28 cents for picking or packing strawberries and 43 cents for picking snap beans. Over three-fifths of the workers were females and over four-fifths were Negroes. Most of the male workers were youths or older men.

In each crop there was little difference in the amount earned per hour by male and by female workers, although adult workers averaged somewhat higher hourly earnings than youths or children. A fifth of the snap bean pickers earned less than 30 cents an hour, three-fifths earned from 30 to 60 cents, and the remaining fifth 60 cents or more an hour.

The surveys were timed to cover peak weeks in the harvest of each crop — April 8-14 for strawberries and May 6-12 for snap beans. Strawberry workers were surveyed in parts of Tangipahoa and Livingston Parishes and snap bean workers in parts of Livingston, Tangipahoa, and St. Helena Parishes. A total of 167 farms and 718 hired workers in the areas were covered by the surveys; approximately 90 percent of these workers were employed only in harvesting strawberries and snap beans.

Strawberry pickers put in a much fuller work-week on the reporting farm than snap bean pickers, 42 hours compared with 16 hours. The weekly earnings on the reporting farm thus averaged approximately \$11.70 for strawberry pickers and only \$7.10 for snap bean pickers. Some of the snap bean pickers may have worked elsewhere than on the reporting farm during the survey week. Negro workers in each of the two crops averaged more hours worked per week and higher weekly earnings than white workers. They also picked on the average a greater quantity per hour of strawberries or snap beans than did the white pickers. However, a greater proportion of the white pickers were children and youths under 18 years of age, many of them relatives of the operator.

Piece rates paid Louisiana snap bean pickers afforded workers in comparable age, sex and race groups hourly earnings over 50 percent higher than those of strawberry pickers. Various factors are responsible for this wage rate differential. One reason for the lower wage rates in strawberry picking is the relatively more ample labor supply at the time of the year when strawberries are harvested than later in the season when snap bean picking and other farm activities are in progress. Another factor involved is the difference in duration of the employment afforded in the two crops.

1. STRAWBERRY AND SNAP BEAN HARVESTS IN LOUISIANA

Strawberries and snap beans are important crops in some sections of Louisiana, with heavy demands for harvest labor. In 1945, Louisiana strawberry farmers planted approximately 14,400 acres of spring strawberries from which a total of nearly 1 million crates was harvested. The major strawberry producing area includes Tangipahoa Parish, which has been advertised as "the largest strawberry producing section in the world," and Livingston Parish, adjacent to Tangipahoa. Census data indicate that in 1939 these two Parishes produced approximately 85 percent of the strawberries in Louisiana. Although the 1945 acreage was somewhat smaller than the 1939 acreage, the relative importance of these two Parishes in the State's strawberry production was about the same.

In June 1945, indications were that more than one-half million bushels of snap beans for fresh shipment would be harvested from approximately 6,000 acres in Louisiana. About 80 percent of the State's commercial snap beans for fresh market are grown on farms in Tangipahoa, Livingston and St. Helena Parishes, the area included in the wage survey of snap bean harvesters.

Strawberries are very perishable and must be shipped the day they are picked. Most strawberries in the area are produced on farms near branches of the Illinois Central railroad, which run through Tangipahoa and Livingston Parishes. In a few cases, beans are raised on the same farms that produce strawberries, but generally beans are grown on farms farther from the shipping points. Beans do not deteriorate so rapidly as strawberries, and can be hauled greater distances without harm. The area in which snap beans are grown in these Parishes covers a much wider territory than the strawberry producing area.

Farmers depend largely on the labor of persons from nearby villages, towns or other farms for picking strawberries and beans. Usually, the farmer makes arrangements with workers before the picking season begins, recruiting them as far in advance of harvest as possible. Almost all commercial growers of snap beans and strawberries hire extra labor for harvesting. In addition, some farmers pay wages to members of their families for harvest work.

Strawberry pickers who come from some distance often have transportation and lodging or house on the farm provided by the farm operator. Strawberry pickers who are provided lodging on the farm, along with those from nearby farms or villages, usually work on one farm at least until the peak of the harvest has passed. The strawberry harvest covers a period of about 8 to 10 weeks. Some farmers in the area surveyed pay a bonus to pickers remaining for the entire season, but this is not a common practice.

Because the bean harvest does not provide much steady work on one farm, pickers may work on a number of farms in the course of the bean harvest, which extends over a period of about 5 weeks. From 50 to 60 percent of the bean crop is harvested at the first picking. The remainder of the crop is harvested in one or two more pickings spaced long enough after the first picking for the small beans not picked the first time to mature. Some of the workers return to farms worked on previously to do the second or third pickings.

Strawberry fields are usually picked over every two days, when weather is good, to keep the berries from becoming overripe. Most growers keep their harvesters steadily employed by having half of the acreage picked each day, including Sundays. Strawberries require some care in picking, so that they are not bruised as they are picked and placed in pint-sized containers. The pickers carry a tray, with a capacity of 6 or 8 pint-boxes, in which they place the boxes as they are filled. The berries are then taken to the packing shed, which is located as near the strawberry fields as feasible. Here the packers sort the berries, cull out the bad ones, grade them according to size and quality, and pack them into boxes for market. Packing requires somewhat more skill than picking. Inexperienced labor can be used in picking, if supervision is provided to assure that berries are not bruised, picked incorrectly, or mashed when placed in boxes. Packing must be done by persons familiar enough with the crop to know which berries are firm enough to ship to market without softening or decaying, and yet not too green. The area surveyed specializes in a "fancy pack," which requires experience in packing.

Operations required in the harvest of beans include picking and in some cases grading and packing. Picking is done directly into the hamper in which the beans are shipped to market, and in most cases no further operations are necessary. In some cases, however, the beans are repacked to remove excessive amounts of culls, sand or other foreign matter that would lower the grade. Unpaid family workers often do this extra operation, although some workers may be hired to do this and other work related to the harvest.

2. FARMS AND WORKERS SURVEYED, APRIL-MAY 1945

During selected weeks of April and May 1945, special enumerative sample surveys were conducted to obtain wage information for workers harvesting strawberries in parts of Tangipahoa and Livingston Parishes, and for workers harvesting snap beans in these two Parishes and St. Helena Parish. A total of 167 farms was covered in the surveys, and 118 of these had hired workers employed during the survey week. Of the 718 hired workers employed on these farms, all but about 10 percent were doing only harvesting strawberries or snap beans during the week.

In each case the survey was timed to cover a week of peak harvest. In the week of the strawberry survey, April 8-14, a total of 219 carlots of strawberries were shipped from Louisiana, the largest number for any one week during the harvest period of early strawberries. Because the survey was timed to cover the peak period of harvesting berries for the fresh market, wage rates are not available for workers hired for harvesting and stemming berries for processing. This usually takes place near the end of the season. During the 1944 season, about 60 percent of the total strawberry production in the State went for fresh shipment. Wages and wage rates of bean harvesters were obtained for the week of May 6-12. A total of 160 solid carlots of snap beans moved by rail from Louisiana during this week.

Size of farm.-The acreages in strawberries or in snap beans on the farms surveyed were usually quite small, averaging about 2.5 acres. Many of the farmers growing strawberries have only an acre or two of strawberries, and in addition grow peppers, cucumbers, or other truck crops. About 10 percent of the snap bean

growers who hired labor during the survey week reported that they had less than 1 acre of snap beans, and only 12 percent reported that they had 6 acres or more. Snap beans or other truck crops are often secondary enterprises on dairy farms in the area.

The farms producing these crops are also quite small in total acreage, with the farms producing snap beans being somewhat larger than those producing strawberries. Thus of the 58 farms with hired labor included in the strawberry survey, three-fifths had less than 10 acres of harvested cropland in 1944. In the case of the snap bean survey about a fifth of the 60 farms reporting hired workers had less than 10 acres of harvested cropland in 1944 and an additional 40 percent had 10-19 acres. In spite of the small average size of these farms, the strawberry farms had an average of 5.4 hired workers in the survey week and the bean farms averaged 6.7 hired workers, (table 1).

Table 1. Distribution of strawberry and snap bean farms surveyed reporting hired labor and of hired workers reported, by size of farm, major producing areas of Louisiana, selected weeks in April and May 1945

Acres of cropland harvested in 1944	Strawberries 1/					Snap beans 2/				
	Farms		Hired workers			Farms		Hired workers		
			Average					Average		
	Num- ber	Per- cent	Num- ber	Per- cent	number per farm	Num- ber	Per- cent	Num- ber	Per- cent	number per farm
Total	58	100	314	100	5.4	60	100	404	100	6.7
Under 5 acres	13	22	52	17	4.0	1	2	5	1	5.0
5 - 9 acres	22	38	120	38	5.5	10	17	66	16	6.6
10 - 19 acres	16	28	103	33	6.4	26	43	213	53	8.2
20 acres and over	4	7	26	8	6.5	17	28	95	24	5.6
Acreage not reported	3	5	13	4	4.3	6	10	25	6	4.2

1/ Data for strawberry farms based on sample survey in Tangipahoa and Livingston Parishes and relate to week of April 8-14, 1945.

2/ Data for snap bean farms based on sample survey in Tangipahoa, Livingston, and St. Helena Parishes and relate to week of May 6-12, 1945.

The workers surveyed.-The harvesters of strawberries and beans were very similar in race and sex composition. In each case, slightly over three-fifths of the workers were females and over four-fifths of the workers were Negroes. Most of the male workers in each crop were youths or older men. Only 10 percent of the workers reporting on age were males aged 18 to 44 (table 2).

Table 2.-Distribution of strawberry and snap bean pickers, by sex and age, major producing area of Louisiana, selected weeks, April and May 1945

Sex and age	Strawberry pickers 1/		Bean pickers 2/	
	Number of		Number of	
	workers	Percent	workers	Percent
	in survey		in survey	
Both sexes - all ages	258	100	201	100
Under 14	55	21	51	25
14 - 17	57	22	41	20
18 - 44	97	38	81	41
45 and over	49	19	28	14
Males - all ages	97	38	73	37
Under 14	21	8	28	14
14 - 17	27	11	18	9
18 - 44	27	11	17	9
45 and over	22	8	10	5
Females - all ages	161	62	128	63
Under 14	34	13	23	11
14 - 17	30	11	23	11
18 - 44	70	27	64	32
45 and over	27	11	18	9

1/ Data for strawberry pickers related to the week of April 8-14, 1945.

2/ Data for snap bean pickers relate to the week of May 6-12, 1945; information on age available for only 201 of the 357 bean pickers surveyed.

One-half of the strawberry pickers were Negro females and one-half of these were 18 to 44 years old. In the case of bean pickers, three-fifths were Negro females and over half of them were in the ages between 18 and 44. In each of the two crops surveyed, about two-fifths of all workers were in the age group 18-44, but a slightly larger proportion of snap bean pickers were under 14 years of age than in the case of strawberry pickers.

Of the white workers who were working for wages in harvest operations of the two crops, half were related to the farm operator for whom they worked. In most cases, these were wives or children of the operators, but cousins, in-laws, nephews, nieces, and other relatives of the farmers were also reported as working for wages during the harvest period.

3. WAGE RATES, WAGES, AND HOURS WORKED FOR SELECTED WEEKS, APRIL-MAY, 1945

Wage rates.-Strawberry and bean harvesters in the areas surveyed were paid piece rates. Rates for picking strawberries in the area surveyed averaged 3.1 cents per pint box (table 3). Often the workers in the area are paid a

specified rate for a tray or carrier of filled boxes, but these rates were converted to pint rates in obtaining the average. Most rates per 8-pint carrier were between 20 cents and 30 cents; a few pickers were paid 15 cents per 6-pint carrier. Other workers were paid a per-pint rate, ranging from 2 cents to 4 cents per box.

Table 3.-Average wage rates and performance of strawberry pickers and packers and snap bean pickers, major producing areas in Louisiana, selected weeks in April and May, 1945 1/

Crop, operation, and type of worker	: Number of :	Rate		Performance	
	: workers :			: Units per :	: Units per
	: in survey :	Amount:	Unit	: hour :	: day
	Number	Cents		Number	Number

Strawberry picking

All pickers	258	3.1	Pint box	8.8	60.2
White pickers	55	3.2	Pint box	8.6	56.3
Negro pickers	203	3.1	Pint box	8.9	61.3
Males aged 18 - 44	27	3.2	Pint box	9.9	76.8
Other pickers	231	3.1	Pint box	8.7	58.4
Pickers not receiving meals	216	3.2	Pint box	8.8	62.1
Pickers receiving meals	42	2.9	Pint box	8.7	49.4

Strawberry packing

All packers	29	27.4	24-pt. crate	1.1	7.9
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Bean picking

All pickers	357	49.5	Bu. hamper	.91	6.3
White pickers	19	49.7	Bu. hamper	.74	4.7
Negro pickers	338	49.5	Bu. hamper	.92	6.4
Males aged 18 - 44 2/	17	47.9	Bu. hamper	1.08	8.1
Other pickers 2/	184	49.0	Bu. hamper	.86	6.7
Pickers not receiving meals	253	49.4	Bu. hamper	.95	6.3
Pickers receiving meals	104	49.8	Bu. hamper	.80	6.6

- 1/ Data for strawberry workers relate to the week of April 8-14, 1945; data for snap bean pickers relate to the week of May 6-12, 1945.
- 2/ Information on age available for only 201 of the 357 bean pickers surveyed.

Average piece rates paid Negro workers for picking strawberries were practically the same as those paid white workers, and adult males received approximately the same average rate as the other workers. Strawberry pickers receiving

meals were paid at an average rate slightly less per unit than those pickers who did not receive meals. However, this difference in rates may be due to the fact that most of the berry pickers who received meals were related to the farm operator.

Strawberry packers were paid an average of 27.4 cents for packing a 24-pint crate of strawberries. Most of the packers received either 25 cents or 30 cents for packing a crate of strawberries, but in a few cases they received only 20 cents, and in a few other instances they received 35 cents per crate. In the few cases in which workers were paid rates above or below the 25 to 30 cents range, the workers were wives or other relatives of the farm operator.

Snap bean pickers received an average rate of 49.5 cents per hamper. In the area surveyed, the hamper is bushel-size and holds approximately 30 pounds of beans. Nearly 90 percent of the pickers received 50 cents for picking a hamper of beans, and about 5 percent received 40 cents. Only a very few received as low as 35 cents or more than 50 cents per hamper.

No information is available prior to 1942 for indicating changes in wage rates for harvesting these crops. In the 3 years since the end of May 1942, strawberry picking rates in Louisiana increased slightly less than bean picking rates. The former rose from an average of 3.4 cents to 6.2 cents per quart, while the latter increased from 25 cents a bushel hamper 49.5 cents. ^{1/}

Hourly earnings.-There was a wide difference between the two crops in the average hourly earnings of workers. Strawberry pickers earned an average of 28 cents per hour and bean pickers averaged 43 cents per hour (table 4). In each crop there was only a very slight difference in the amount earned per hour by male workers and by female workers, but males 18-44 had the highest hourly earnings. Male strawberry pickers in this age group earned 32 cents an hour and snap bean pickers earned 48 cents an hour. For strawberry pickers, there was very little difference in the average amount earned per hour by white pickers and by Negro workers, but Negro snap bean workers picked a larger quantity per hour and earned 43 cents an hour, compared with 37 cents for white pickers. The lower performance of the white bean pickers is chiefly due to their age composition. A larger proportion of white than of Negro bean pickers were members of the operator's family and a larger proportion were less than 14 years old.

Of the 201 snap bean pickers for whom individual information is available, 20 percent had hourly earnings of less than 30 cents, 61 percent earned from 30 to 60 cents, and the remaining 19 percent earned 60 cents or more. This wide spread in earnings, compared with piece rates which showed little variation, was due more to age than any other single factor. None of the strawberry pickers had hourly earnings as high as 60 cents, and 70 percent of them made less than 30 cents an hour.

Time worked, daily and weekly earnings.-Strawberry pickers and snap bean pickers worked approximately the same number of hours per day, 6.8 for strawberry pickers and 7.0 for bean pickers, (table 4). In each of the two crops, Negro pickers averaged a longer work-day than white workers, partly because adult workers made up a larger proportion of the Negro than white workers in both crops. Bean pickers who received meals worked more hours per day than those who did not receive meals, while the opposite situation prevailed in the case of strawberry pickers. This difference between the two crops arises in part from age differences. Forty-five percent of the strawberry pickers receiving meals were under 14 years of age, while only 30 percent of the snap bean pickers receiving meals were less than 14 years old. Strawberry packers worked longer hours per day than did strawberry pickers, as they must prepare all strawberries picked during the day for shipment to market that same day.

^{1/} Wage rate data for 1942 are from Farm Wage Rates, Farm Employment and Related Data, Bur. Agr. Econ., Jan. 1943, p. 145.

Table 4.--Average cash wages earned and time worked, strawberry pickers and packers, and snap bean pickers, major producing areas in Louisiana, selected weeks in April and May, 1945 ^{1/}

Crop, operation, and type of worker	: Number :	Average cash			Average time worked		
	: of :	wages earned			: on reporting farm		
	: workers:	on reporting			: Hours: Days :Hours		
	: in :	farm			: per : per :per		
	: survey :	Hourly:	Daily :	Weekly:	day :	week :	week
	Number	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Number:	Number:	Number
<u>Strawberry picking</u>							
All pickers	258	.28	1.90	11.70	6.8	6.2	42
White pickers	55	.27	1.80	10.60	6.6	5.9	38
Negro pickers	203	.28	1.90	12.00	6.9	6.3	43
Males aged 18 - 44	27	.32	2.50	15.30	7.8	6.1	48
Other pickers	231	.27	1.80	11.20	6.7	6.2	42
Pickers not receiving meals	216	.28	2.00	12.40	7.0	6.3	44
Pickers receiving meals	42	.26	1.40	8.30	5.7	5.7	32
<u>Strawberry packing</u>							
All packers	29	.29	2.20	13.70	7.5	6.3	47
<u>Bean picking</u>							
All pickers	357	.43	3.00	7.10	7.0	2.3	16
White pickers	19	.37	2.40	4.20	6.4	1.8	11
Negro pickers	338	.43	3.10	7.20	7.1	2.4	17
Males aged 18 - 44 ^{2/}	17	.48	3.70	7.50	7.6	2.1	16
Other pickers ^{2/}	184	.40	3.10	6.20	7.7	2.0	16
Pickers not receiving meals	253	.45	3.00	7.30	6.6	2.4	16
Pickers receiving meals	104	.38	3.10	6.50	8.3	2.1	17

^{1/} Data for strawberry workers relate to the week of April 8-14, 1945; data for snap bean pickers relate to the week of May 6-12, 1945.

^{2/} Information on age available for only 201 of the 357 pickers surveyed.

Strawberry pickers usually put in 6 or 7 days of work on one farm during the week in contrast to a much shorter time worked on one farm during the week by bean pickers. Strawberry pickers averaged 6.2 days per week on the reporting farm while bean pickers averaged only 2.3 days. Strawberry growers are usually able to arrange their picking so that they will have work for their pickers every day for a number of weeks, but when the beans are ready for picking the entire acreage may be worked over in a day or two, leaving no further work on that farm until the beans are ready for a second picking. As in the case of hours worked per day, Negroes worked a larger number of days per week at each crop. There was practically no difference in the average number of days worked during the survey week by males 18-44 and other workers in each crop.

The short number of days worked by snap bean pickers meant that they worked, on the average, only 16 hours per week on one farm. Strawberry pickers, with approximately the same number of hours per day as bean pickers, but who usually worked every day during the week — even on Sundays in many cases — averaged 42 hours per week.

Strawberry pickers earned a daily wage of \$1.90, while snap bean pickers earned \$3.00. However, because of the greater number of days per week worked by strawberry pickers on the farm surveyed, their weekly wages were \$11.70, while those of snap bean pickers were only \$7.10 on the reporting farm. Snap bean pickers worked only a little more than a third as many hours in the week as the strawberry pickers, but their weekly wage was nearly three-fifths as large. The substantially higher hourly earnings resulting from rates for snap bean picking than for strawberry picking partially offset the effect of the much shorter work-week of the bean pickers.

In each crop, Negro pickers had higher average weekly wages than white pickers. This was due to the longer time, both hours per day and days per week put in by Negro workers as well as their higher average quantity picked per hour and is partly explained by the fact that a larger proportion of the white workers were children or youths. In the case of strawberries, more than half (58 percent) of the white wage workers were under 18 years of age, but only 34 percent of the Negroes. Among bean harvesters on whom age data were obtained, the corresponding percentages were 56 for whites and 45 for Negroes. Negro strawberry pickers averaged \$12.00 for a 43-hour week, and Negro pickers of snap beans averaged \$7.20 for a 17-hour week. The earnings of white strawberry pickers averaged \$10.60 on the reporting farm and white bean pickers averaged \$4.20.

Because of longer hours worked, strawberry packers earned more per day and more per week than did the pickers, \$2.20 per day as compared with \$1.90 per day, and \$13.70 per week as compared with \$11.70 per week.

Weekly wages earned for work on one farm by strawberry pickers as shown in table 5 represent in most cases total weekly earnings. Since this is not the case for the snap bean pickers, table 5 shows the distribution of only strawberry pickers by weekly earnings. Approximately half of the strawberry pickers surveyed earned between \$8.00 and \$16.00 per week on the reporting farm, one-fourth, mostly the younger workers, earned less than \$8.00, and one-fourth earned more than \$16.00. A larger percentage of Negroes than whites earned \$16.00 or more during the survey week.

Table 5.—Distribution by weekly earnings of strawberry pickers, by race, major producing area of Louisiana, week ended April 14, 1945

Weekly earnings	Race of pickers					
	Total		White		Negro	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	258	100	55	100	203	100
\$8.00 or less	72	28	19	35	53	26
\$8.01 to \$16.00	127	49	28	51	99	49
\$16.01 and over	59	23	8	14	51	25

Perquisites received by workers and miscellaneous information.—About 70 percent of the strawberry pickers and 14 percent of the bean pickers were furnished a house or lodging on the farm where the work was done, in addition to the cash wages received (table 6). Only 16 percent of the strawberry pickers received any meals, and in most cases these were persons related to the operator. Often the pickers carried their lunches to the field, so that as little time as possible was lost at lunch time. More of the snap bean pickers, 29 percent, reported that they received meals during the survey week. Daily transportation from home to field was provided by operators to 22 percent of the strawberry pickers and 31 percent of the snap bean pickers. Twenty-four percent of the bean pickers for whom the information was available and 12 percent of the strawberry pickers were related to the farm operator.

Table 6.—Miscellaneous information on strawberry pickers and on snap bean pickers, major producing areas in Louisiana, selected weeks in April and May, 1945

Item	Strawberry pickers		Bean pickers	
	reporting item 1/		reporting item 2/	
	:Percent of		:Percent of	
	:workers from		:workers from	
	:Number:whom information:		:Number:whom information:	
	:was obtained		:was obtained	
Worker related to operator	31	12	48	24
Workers receiving perquisites				
House 3/	163	63	7	2
Other lodging 4/	18	7	44	12
Meals				
None	216	84	253	71
1 meal a day	17	6	86	24
2 or more meals a day	25	10	18	5
Transportation	56	22	109	31
Workers to be employed on this farm less than 60 days during this year	144	56	186	93

1/ Data for strawberry pickers relate to the week of April 8-14, 1945.

2/ Data for snap bean pickers relate to the week of May 6-12, 1945.

3/ Includes apartment in operator's dwelling.

4/ Includes room in operator's dwelling or bunk space in housing provided groups of workers.

Farmers reported that they did not expect to have as many as 60 days of work during the year for over 90 percent of the snap bean pickers and, for over 50 percent of the strawberry pickers. They reported that they would have less than 20 days of work for the majority of the snap bean pickers and less than 50 days for a majority of the strawberry pickers.

4. DIFFERENTIALS IN WAGES AND WAGE RATES

Age-sex differences.—In both strawberry and snap bean picking in Louisiana, the results of the survey show differences in earnings for different age-sex groups which are associated with differences in output per hour and number of hours worked. Because all workers on a given farm were paid the same piece rate regardless of age or sex, and because there was little variation in rates paid on different farms, the age-sex differences in hourly earnings are mainly due to differences in number of pints of berries or bushels of beans picked per hour.

In both crops, adult workers had significantly higher hourly earnings than workers under 18 years of age, although there were not important differences between males and females of the same age. For males as well as for females, the hourly earnings of strawberry pickers aged 14-17 were about a third higher than for children under 14 years of age (table 7). Likewise the hourly earnings of both male and female pickers 18-44 years of age were nearly a third higher than for the 14-17 year age group. Male strawberry pickers 45 years of age and over averaged the same hourly earnings as those 18-44 years of age, but female pickers 45 years of age or over had slightly lower hourly earnings than females 18-44 years of age. The hourly earnings of all male pickers in the strawberry survey averaged 29 cents and of female pickers 27 cents. Among workers 18-44 years of age, hourly earnings for females 18-44 years of age were the same as for males, but in the younger and older groups males averaged somewhat higher hourly earnings than female workers of the same age.

Table 7.—Average wages and time worked by strawberry pickers, by sex and age, major producing areas of Louisiana, week ended April 14, 1945

Sex and age	Number	:	Average cash			Average time worked		
			wages earned			on reporting farm		
			on reporting			Hours: Days: Hours		
			farm			per : per : per		
			Hourly:	Daily:	Weekly:	day	week	week
	Number		Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Number	Number	Number
Both sexes - all ages	258	.28	1.90	11.70	6.8	6.2	42	
Under 14 years	55	.19	1.10	6.70	5.8	6.1	35	
14-17 years	57	.25	1.70	10.40	6.7	6.2	42	
18-44 years	97	.32	2.30	14.20	7.2	6.2	45	
45 years and over	49	.30	2.20	13.80	7.3	6.3	46	
Males - all ages	97	.29	2.00	12.20	6.9	6.2	42	
Under 14 years	21	.21	1.20	7.20	5.6	6.2	35	
14-17 years	27	.27	1.70	10.00	6.2	5.9	37	
18-44 years	27	.32	2.50	15.30	7.8	6.1	48	
45 years and over	22	.32	2.50	15.70	7.7	6.4	49	
Females - all ages	161	.27	1.80	11.40	6.8	6.2	42	
Under 14 years	34	.18	1.10	6.30	6.0	6.0	36	
14-17 years	30	.23	1.70	10.80	7.1	6.4	46	
18-44 years	70	.32	2.20	13.80	7.0	6.3	44	
45 years and over	27	.28	2.00	12.30	7.0	6.3	44	

Because the adult strawberry pickers worked, on the average, more hours per day and more days per week than did the youths and children, their daily and weekly earnings exceeded those of young workers by a greater percentage than in the case of hourly earnings. Thus strawberry pickers less than 14 years old earned less than \$7.00 a week, while adult workers 18 years of age and over earned twice as much. As in the case of hourly earnings, sex differences were not important in the case of weekly earnings. The average weekly wages of \$12.20 for all male strawberry pickers, however, were only slightly higher than those of female pickers.

Wage information for snap bean pickers by age and sex was obtained for only 201 of the 357 pickers included in the survey. In general, differences in hourly earnings of the several age groups, and therefore in output per hour, were similar to those found in the case of strawberry pickers. Workers in the older age groups averaged progressively higher hourly earnings (table 8). Girls under 18 years of age averaged somewhat higher hourly earnings for picking beans than boys of the same age group, although boys exceeded girls in earnings for picking strawberries. Among adult workers, however, there was practically no difference in the hourly earnings of men and women. Males of all ages averaged 37 cents an hour, and female averaged 42 cents.

Table 8.—Average wages and time worked by snap bean pickers, by sex and age, major producing areas of Louisiana, week ended May 12, 1945

Sex and age	Number	Average cash wages earned on reporting farm			Average time worked on reporting farm		
		: Hourly: Daily: Weekly:			: per day: per week: per week:		
		Dollars Dollars Dollars			Number Number Number		
		: in survey:			: per day: per week: per week:		
Both sexes - all ages	201	.40	3.10	6.40	7.7	2.0	16
Under 14	51	.30	2.50	5.60	8.3	2.3	19
14 - 17	41	.39	3.10	6.10	7.8	2.0	16
18 - 44	31	.47	3.50	6.90	7.5	2.0	15
45 and over	28	.49	3.40	6.30	6.9	1.9	13
Males - all ages	73	.37	2.90	5.70	7.8	2.0	15
Under 14	28	.29	2.40	5.10	8.5	2.1	18
14 - 17	18	.37	2.80	4.90	7.6	1.8	14
18 - 44	17	.48	3.70	7.50	7.6	2.1	16
45 and over	10	.50	3.00	5.60	5.9	1.9	11
Females - all ages	128	.42	3.30	6.70	7.7	2.1	16
Under 14	23	.32	2.50	6.30	8.0	2.5	20
14 - 17	23	.41	3.20	7.00	8.0	2.2	17
18 - 44	64	.47	3.50	6.80	7.5	1.9	15
45 and over	18	.49	3.60	6.70	7.5	1.8	14

There was little difference in the weekly hours worked and wages earned among the several age-sex groups of bean pickers. Adult males 18-44 years of age were the only group whose weekly earnings of \$7.50 on the reporting farm were noticeably higher than those of any other age-sex group.

Type of work differences in wage rates.--The fact that average hourly cash wages of Louisiana snap bean pickers (43 cents) were more than 50 percent higher than those of strawberry pickers (28 cents) working in the same part of Louisiana, raises a question as to possible reasons for this difference. Data on composition of the workers and the nature of the work indicate that the higher hourly cash wages of bean pickers are not explainable in terms of age, sex, or race differences for the two groups of workers. The proportion of workers in the different age, sex and race groups was practically the same in both crops, and the type of work required no appreciable difference in skills. Hence, the piece rate paid for bean picking was basically higher than that for strawberry picking, since it permitted higher hourly cash wages for comparable types of work. Despite the higher wage rates paid by bean growers than by strawberry producers, however, the former paid harvesters the same proportion of the price they received for a bushel of beans as the latter did for picking and packing a quart of strawberries.

Information was not secured on the value of housing, meals or other items furnished free of charge to the workers in addition to cash wages. Although a much larger percentage of the strawberry pickers were furnished some type of lodging, it is not believed that the value of the housing or lodging provided would offset a substantial part of the 50 percent differential in hourly cash wages. Moreover, larger proportions of the bean pickers than of the strawberry pickers were provided meals and transportation.

The higher wage rates paid bean pickers may be in part the result of the much shorter period of employment afforded them than strawberry pickers, which results in low weekly earnings from work on one farm. Another important reason for lower wage rates in strawberry picking than in picking beans is that the strawberry harvest comes earlier and at a time of the season when there is much less competition for work in other crops. The peak of the strawberry harvest season in Louisiana comes early in April, while the peak of the bean harvest about the middle of May. Partly because of this, strawberry growers in Louisiana have felt the pressure of the wartime reduced labor supply somewhat less than snap bean growers. This is further suggested by the relationship of the harvest wage rates to the prices received by the growers.

Snap bean picking rates in Louisiana averaged 25 cents per bushel in 1942 and 35 cents in 1943. The rates represented 18 percent of the 1942 season average price per bushel for the spring crop of snap beans received by Louisiana growers and 15 percent of the 1943 price. The 1945 bean picking rate of 49.5 cents per bushel is estimated to represent 20 percent of the 1945 season average price. Between 1942 and 1945, snap bean picking rates in Louisiana have increased relatively more than prices received by farmers. In the case of strawberry harvest wage rates, the opposite situation occurred. The 1942 average piece rates for picking and packing a quart (or crate of 24 quarts) of strawberries are estimated to have amounted to 28 percent of the season average price received by Louisiana growers. By 1945 this ratio had declined to approximately 20 percent, as a result of a more rapid increase in prices received for strawberries than in wage rates paid.

Area differences in wages for same type of work.-Wage information for strawberry picking during peak weeks of the 1945 season is available for major producing areas of Florida and North Carolina. 2/ Although wage rates of 3.8 cents per quart for picking strawberries in North Carolina and 5.1 cents per quart in Florida were lower than the rate in Louisiana (6.2 cents per quart), the hourly earnings from picking did not differ materially among these areas, and were generally low. The North Carolina and Florida strawberry pickers averaged 26 and 32 cents an hour, respectively, compared with 28 cents an hour in Louisiana. However, the Louisiana pickers worked nearly twice as many hours during the week on the reporting farm. Their weekly earnings of approximately \$12.00 were therefore nearly twice those of the Florida or North Carolina strawberry pickers.

5. METHOD OF SURVEY

The area surveyed covers parts of three Parishes located in southeastern Louisiana, Tangipahoa, Livingston, and St. Helena. The farms are generally small and tended to be uniform with respect to crops grown and labor practices. Almost all growers normally hire seasonal labor for harvesting operations. Crop acreage data on file in the Office of the State Statistician indicated that there were about 6,000 farmers in the area growing strawberries, primarily for sale. From the best indications available, it was estimated that the area contains a total of 1,500 snap bean growers. The major strawberry producing area is concentrated on or near the Illinois Central Railroad. In some cases, snap beans are grown on the same farms that produce strawberries, but snap beans are also grown on farms more distant from the railroad; thus the snap bean area covers more territory.

Because of uniformity of the farms as to crop acreage, crops grown, and hiring practices, a route sample was considered satisfactory for both crops. Specified sampling routes were outlined and enumerators were instructed to interview alternate growers along the route, counting both sides of the road, in the case of snap beans and every fourth farm along the route in the case of strawberries. A total of about 50 miles of routes was selected for strawberries. In both surveys, enumerators were instructed that if a farm could not be enumerated, the next grower in the direction traveled should be enumerated as an alternate.

2/ Survey of Wages and Wage Rates in Agriculture, Report No. 1, "Wages and Wage Rates of Seasonal Farm Workers in Special Crop Areas of Florida, Feb.-Mar., 1945" Bur. Agr. Econ., May, 1945; Farm Labor, Bur. Agr. Econ., July 13, 1945.

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